Managing International Networks Across Cultures

A case study of the IAU National Outreach Coordinators

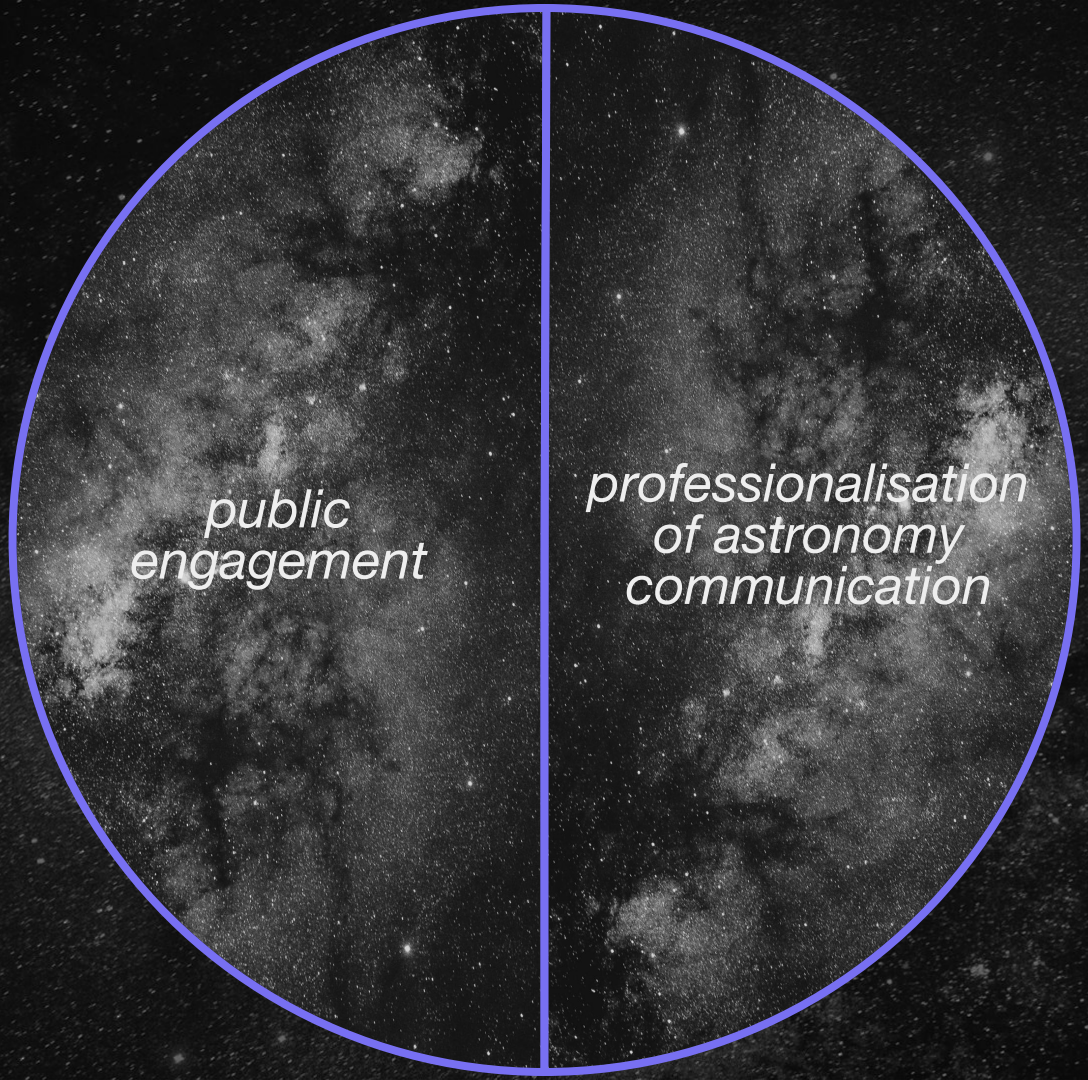


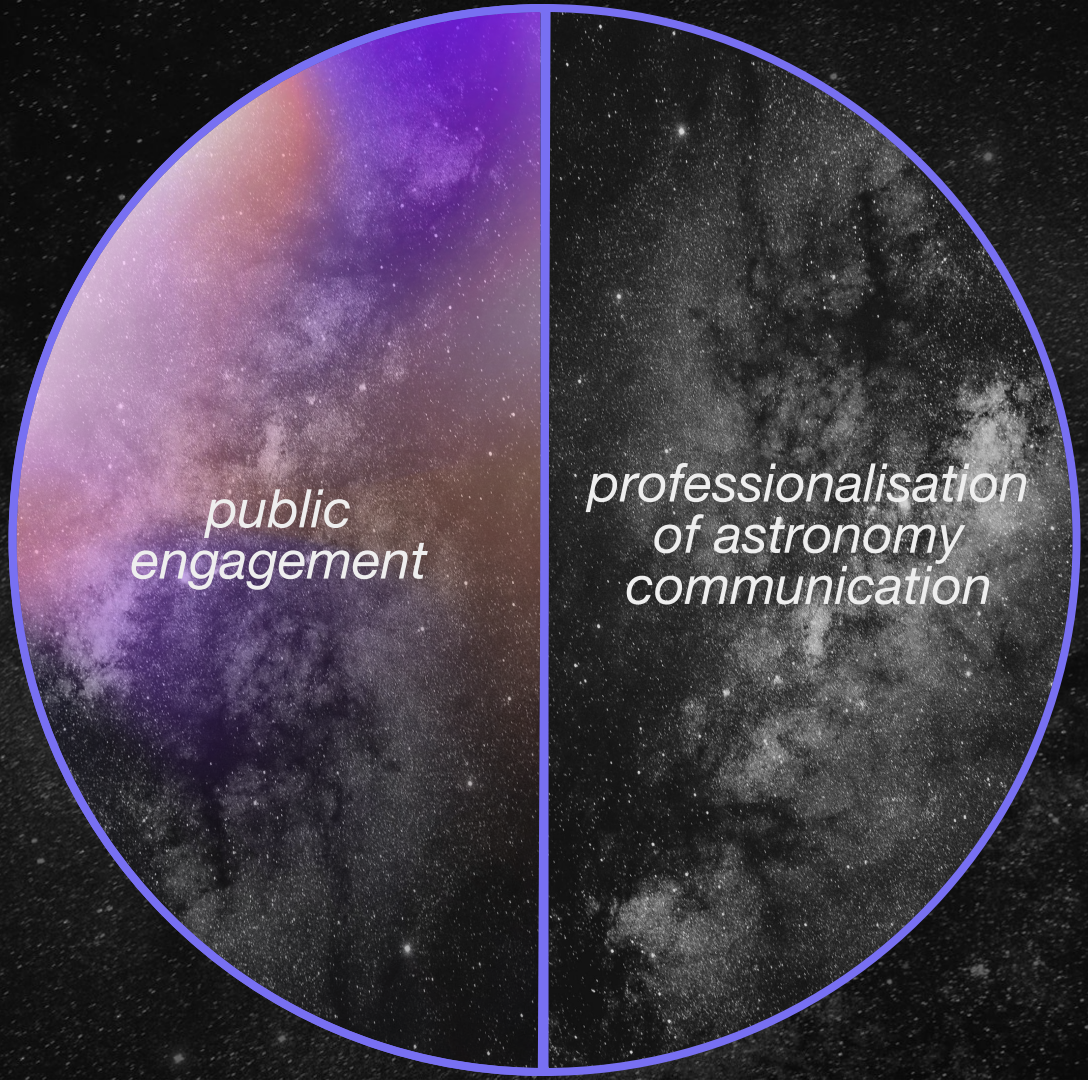
Kelly Blumenthal, PhD, EdM
Director, OAO



IAU OFFICE FOR ASTRONOMY OUTREACH




public
engagement
professionalisation
of astronomy
communication


public
engagement
professionalisation
of astronomy
communication

OAO Global Themes



Women and Girls in Astronomy



Inclusive Astronomy Communication



Dark and Quiet Skies

OAO Global Project

100 Hours of Astronomy

100 Years of the Planetarium

2 - 5 October 2025





The National Outreach Coordinator Network



SciComm can be considered a cultural practice that focuses on creating shared meaning

e.g., Davies et al. 2019

Localisation implies…

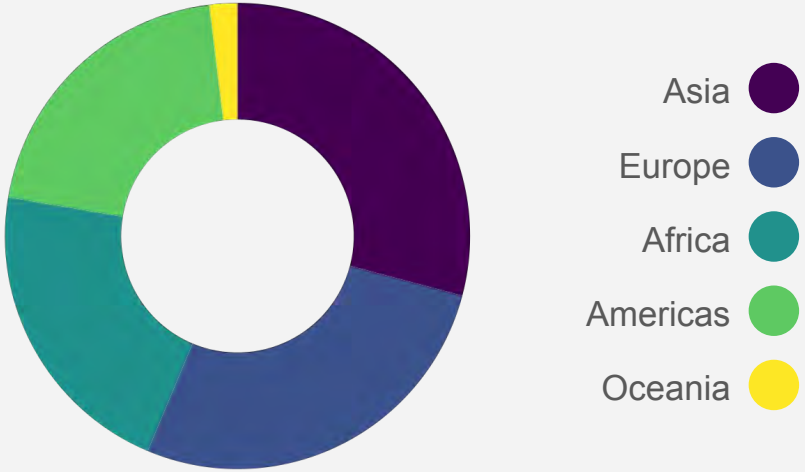
- Representation
- Intersectionality
- Relationship building
- Improved Science Capital



The OAO conducted a survey to understand:

- the **current state** of the NOCs Network
- how the NOCs **feel** about being a part of the Network
- NOCs' **ideas** for the future

Who participated?

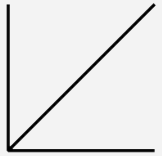


~80% participation



Bettymaya Foott

Motivations: Why become a NOC?



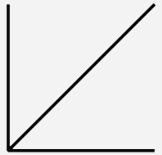
↘ Self Improvement

- Access to training, resources, community
- Knowledge sharing/ share ideas for outreach and evaluation

↘ Spread astronomy globally

- Build bridges between the IAU, its Offices, and the global public
- Have an impact through collective effort

Motivations: Why become a NOC?



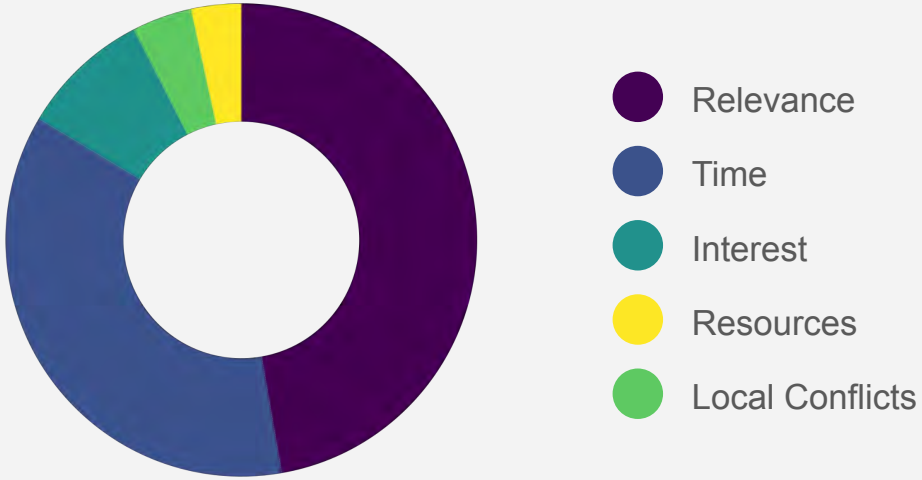
↘ Inspire the future generation of scientists

- Promote astronomy globally and bring OAO projects, programmes, and resources to people worldwide

↘ Be a part of the astronomy outreach community

- Through the IAU's international network of astronomy researchers, educators and communicators, improve practice
- Network with key stakeholders worldwide in the field (including IAU members)

Barriers: Engagement



Barriers: Language

- **All major meetings are conducted in English**
- **Limited capacity to facilitate/host non-English language meetings**
  - Some language regions (e.g., Arabic-speaking world) are self-directed, host their own
  - Others are disparate, disconnected (e.g., French and Portuguese)
- **Limited capacity to provide non-English resources/translations**
  - Time intensive
  - Human capacity

Barriers: Communication

↘ Cultural differences

- Providing space and infrastructure for networking, global exposure of the NOCs, etc.
- Check out *The Culture Map* by Erin Meyer

↘ Promotion, advertisement and recognition

- Providing space and infrastructure for networking, global exposure of the NOCs, etc.

↘ Clear goals and expectations

- Guidelines on key performance indicators
- Set a clear strategy
- Face-to-face meetings (relationship and trust building)

Need: Connections

- ↘ Collaboration
  - Better/more efficient use of communication tools
  - Stronger ties with those in networks from other IAU Offices, etc.
  - Opportunities to network



Pierre Carton

Need: Connections

- ↘ (More efficient) Meetings
  - Thematic meetings that promote collaborative learning
  - Meet as a group more regularly, reflexively
- ↘ Recognise the experience and expertise of more senior NOCs

Arash Danesh, Iran

Need: Meaningful Reporting

- **Strategic**
  - Clear goals and objectives, KPIs
- **Multi-functional**
  - Used to showcase NOCs' work to the rest of the network and the world.



Albert Forson, Ghana

Need: Meaningful Reporting

- ↘ Recognition
  - Case studies
  - Public reporting and promotion
  - Certificates/ awards



Doh Koffi Addor, Togo

Need: Resource Sharing

- Need a better way to share resources and best practices
- Get feedback from the network on ideas and challenges; build relationships within the network
- Funding



Somaya Saad, Egypt

Need: Professional Development

- ↘ Training and workshops
- ↘ Accredited certification
- ↘ Peer-to-peer (NOC-to-NOC) mentorship programmes
- ↘ Participate and present in international conferences
- ↘ Become an IAU member



Suhel Ahmeti, Kosovo

What makes a network **effective**?

- Set clear goals and objectives
- Build trust through consistent interactions and create an environment in which members help each other
- Embrace diversity, leverage collective strengths
- Combine formal and informal structures
- Seek new opportunities to expand the network
- Use tools to improve connection and communication



Thank you!

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OAO Website

CAPj Website

ASTRO ACCEL

